



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

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Agency increases job placements for workers with disabilities

RALEIGH – The state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services increased by 5.7 percent the number of North Carolinians it assisted with finding jobs last year over the year before.

In the 12 months ending Sept. 30, the division assisted 6,303 people with disabilities in achieving their employment objectives. That's compared to 5,961 job placements during the preceding year.

"Gov. Perdue's top priority is getting people back to work," said the division's director, Linda Harrington, "and that's our central mission, providing to all our consumers the needed counseling, training, education or other services to get them ready to work. We can then match them up with businesses' needs, saving the employer time and money."

She noted that DVRS helped secure jobs for residents in all 100 counties and that "for every employer, we have a local office not very far away."

Among the individuals who found new jobs over the past year, 241 were assisted by the agency's on-the-job-training program, which was supported by funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The program compensates employers for wages paid to workers who they've agreed to train. Successful trainees can continue as regular employees.

The agency's internship program was also supported by ARRA funds, and 66 interns went on to full-time jobs with their sponsoring organization. The numbers reflect five individuals who benefitted from both their on-the-job and internship participation.

Besides pre-screening, Harrington says other factors also give the agency's applicants an edge with prospective employers:

- Services "stay on the job." Agency professionals provide continuing, no-cost follow-up consultation to make sure the employee and job remain a good match.
- There are tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities and for adapting the workplace to accommodate a new employee's disability. National data shows that often no accommodations are required in these situations and, if required, can usually be met at minimal or no cost.

According to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, individuals, on average, 'pay back' the cost of their services through taxes in two to four years of employment. Further, employment of these individuals generates savings in the cost of no-longer-needed benefits.

October is "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

For local office and other information: www.ncdhhs.gov/dvrs or 1-800-689-9090

